Afro-Creole Revelry and Rebellion on the British Stage: Jonkanoo in *Obi; or, Three-Fingered Jack* (1800)

Abstract

Scholarship on John Fawcett and Samuel Arnold's *Obi; or Three-Fingered Jack* (Haymarket, 1800) has largely focused on how the pantomime (and its later melodrama adaptation by William Murray) were performed and received relative to maturing debates about slavery, abolition and emancipation. My essay contributes to this ongoing investigation by shifting the emphasis away from the heroic agency embodied by *Obi*'s eponymous 'Three-Fingered Jack' in order to explore the politics of black resistance activated by the minor, but important, character of 'Jonkanoo'. In its recovery of the Jamaican Christmastime festivities that lent this character his name, my essay reinterprets *Obi* in light of a performance tradition infused with subversive energies. It argues that the pantomime must be understood in the context of the slave revolution in Saint Domingue (1791–1804) – a cataclysmic event poignantly described by the historian Robin Blackburn as 'the only successful large-scale and generalized slave revolt known in history' – and examines to what extent *Obi*'s Jonkanoo character might serve as an index for the ambitions as well as limitations of early nineteenth-century acts of cultural transposition. (Word Count: 178 words)

Obi; or Three Fingered Jack was a sell-out success not only in London, where it premiered on 2 July 1800 at the summer theatre of the Haymarket, but across Britain and America. Arranged by John Fawcett, with music by Samuel Arnold, *Obi* was labelled a 'pantomimical drama' based on the 'true' story of 'Three-Fingered Jack', a runaway slave known to have wreaked havoc across the Jamaican plantations for nearly two years before his capture and execution in 1781. The *Supplement to the Royal Gazette* was the first to publish an account of Three-Fingered Jack, identifying him as the 'Captain' of 'a gang of run-away Negroes of above 40 men, and about 18

women'.[1] But it was Benjamin Moseley's *A Treatise on Sugar* (1799) that truly popularized his rebellion and provided the foundation for the novels, chapbooks and plays (including Fawcett's) that followed.

Crucially, Moseley defined Jack as a disciple of obeah. A religious and medical practice carried out by a number of enslaved Africans in the West Indies, obeah had been criminalized in Jamaica since Tacky's Revolt (May–July 1760) – an earlier slave uprising whose participants had 'used oaths and spiritually protective rituals to sustain the most substantial armed rebellion in the eighteenth-century British Caribbean'.[2] By linking Jack to obeah, Moseley's *Treatise* helped render the fugitive slave synonymous with the dangerous challenges to authority, political resistance and outright 'sorcery' that the British public had come to associate with all things obeah (or 'obi'). Fawcett's choice of title for his pantomime encouraged theatregoers to explore these associations further, while also nodding to the fact that by 1800 obeah and/or the historical Three-Fingered Jack had attracted widespread interest in genres as heterogeneous as literature, history, medicine and travel.

If the pantomime of *Obi* was not the first representation of Jack's story, it was, nevertheless, the first dramatic treatment of it. Catering to audiences that were larger and more diverse than those addressed by any other format, the pantomime interlaces the history of Jack's rebellion with a romantic subplot involving the Planter's daughter, Rosa, and Captain Orford, a new arrival in Jamaica to whom she is engaged. Two shooting parties take place: in the first, Orford is superficially wounded by Three-Fingered Jack (so known because of the mutilated hand he acquired in a previous episode of fighting); in the second, Orford is taken prisoner by Jack and hidden in a secret cave which Jack shares with an 'obi woman' and band of 'Negro Robbers'. A government proclamation is issued, offering a reward of 100 guineas and freedom for any slave who kills Three-Fingered Jack. Fearful of Jack's supposedly supernatural powers, only two slaves, Quashee and Sam, are brave enough to volunteer. In the company of Tuckey (Orford's loyal servant) and Rosa (who, dressed in boys' clothes, insists on joining their

expedition), the two (newly christened) slaves reach the rock from whence the Captain was last seen. The party separates as 'a violent storm' erupts, giving Jack the opportunity to capture Rosa. Inside the obi woman's cave, Rosa discovers Orford, with whom she eventually manages to escape; while Jack, in turn, is found by Quashee, Sam and Tuckey. Jack is killed in a close combat that tests each man to his limits; his head and distinctive hand are later exhibited as proof of his death. Soldiers then arrest the band of robbers and the obi woman, clearing the stage for the illumination and grand procession by which the pantomime realizes its spectacular conclusion.

Srinivas Aravamudan neatly describes *Obi* as a performance suggestive of 'a Creole blend of British and African genres including song, carnival mummery, morris dancing, melodrama, and the celebratory spectacle of jonkonnu (or John Canoe)'.[3] Moving on swiftly to discuss William Murray's adaptation of the pantomime in c.1827 into a successful melodrama featuring Ira Aldridge (the celebrated 'African Roscius') in a speaking part as Jack, Aravamudan confines his definition of 'jonkonnu' to a footnote that describes it as 'festive celebrations…sometimes seen as a benign alternative to obeah'.[4] In recent years, there has been excellent work on obeah's centrality to both pantomime and melodrama versions of *Obi*. But the reflections and inflections of 'jonkonnu' that are common to both Fawcett's and Murray's adaptations of Jack's story have received much less notice, notwithstanding the fact that both plays include a minor black character named 'Jonkanoo'.

The Prospectus for Fawcett's pantomime explicitly defines Jonkanoo as 'a grotesque personage, with a ludicrous false head, and head-dress, presiding as Master of Ceremonies at negro balls in Jamaica.'[5] In his essay 'Theatrical Forms, Ideological Conflicts, and the Staging of *Obi*', Jeffrey N. Cox suggests that the scene introducing Jonkanoo (who, critically, appears for the first time on the eve of the expedition against Jack) 'would have been perhaps the most spectacular in the play, involving music, a procession, singing, and dancing'.[6] The character is also of acute interest to Peter Reed, for whom Jonkanoo 'radically embodies a vernacular Black Atlantic', 'filling a growing gap in the play's performance of black roguery'.[7] Both Cox and Reed

are sensitive to how Jonkanoo contributes to the pantomime's action both directly and indirectly through the larger Jonkonnu tradition from which he borrows his name. This essay seeks to go further still, drawing upon scholarship by Richard D. E. Burton, Joseph Roach, Edward W. Said and Alex Woloch in order to inhabit the marginal spaces of both Fawcett's pantomime and Jonkonnu itself.

Although often located on the same spectrum as obeah, Jonkonnu was neither straightforwardly religious nor secular. With a history stretching back to at least the 1680s, Jonkonnu was originally a Jamaican slave festival that took place over the Christmas holidays and New Year (25 December, 26 December and 1 January).[8] One of the earliest surviving descriptions of Jonkonnu appears in the botanist Hans Sloane's *A Voyage to the Islands Madera, Barbados, Nieves, S. Christophers and Jamaica* (1707), wherein Sloane comments upon the slaves' predilection for dance and song, especially during feast days. Taking interest in the 'bawdy' nature of their music and the 'several sorts of Instruments' used, he notes:

> They have likewise in their Dances Rattles ty'd to their Legs and Wrists, and in their Hands, with which they make a noise, keeping time with one which makes a sound answering it on the mouth of an empty Goard or Jar with his Hand. Their Dances consist of great activity and strength of Body, and keeping time, if it can be. They very often tie Cows Tails to their Rumps, and add such other odd things to their Bodies in several places, as gives them a very extraordinary appearance.[9]

For Sloane, the dancers constitute a primitive yet compelling spectacle. But how (far) could such a performance be re-created on stage, and to what effect?

In assessing what was required to transport Jonkonnu from the Jamaican plantations and towns to the regulated theatres of early nineteenth-century Britain, it is important to acknowledge that Jonkonnu's spread across the British Caribbean resulted in generic mutations that rendered it plural, always shifting. Cox's description of *Obi*'s Jonkanoo as a 'hybridized figure' is thus a telling one.[10] It resonates with Kamau Brathwaite's definition of 'creole' as the

process of 'becoming locally creative…& protean: the New World's New World, newly neo-African, the Konnus teeming & transforming'; a cultural form exemplary of what Joseph Roach illuminatingly calls 'circum-Atlantic performance'.[11] Reed uses this to powerful effect in his description of *Obi*'s Jonkanoo as a character who 'marks the circumatlantic movement and return of practices originating on the colonial margins – the forms of the colonial periphery intertwined with, and even interpenetrating, those of the metropole'.[12]

Distinguished from a 'transatlantic' world, Roach's 'circum-Atlantic…insists on the centrality of the diasporic and genocidal histories of Africa and the Americas, North and South, in the creation of the culture of modernity'. Roach thus argues that 'in this sense, a New World was not discovered in the Caribbean, but one was truly invented there.'[13] Moreover, performance not only makes possible but communicates this New World as it crosses boundaries both spatial and temporal. Issuing timely cautions against the 'doomed search for originals' and the misleading fiction of 'a fixed and unified culture', Roach privileges, instead, the process of 'surrogation' that holds together the 'three-sided relationship of memory, performance, and substitution'.[14] This essay also traces these triangular relations as it investigates whether *Obi*'s Jonkanoo character serves, ultimately, as a productive example of intercultural exchange, or colonial domination.

Jonakanoo was first played by Mr Hawtin, an actor from Covent Garden Theatre who specialized in pantomimic roles and whose appearance as Jonkanoo seems to have marked his first at the Haymarket.[15] Interestingly, in the pantomime texts printed in Dublin and Cork (both dated c.1800), no specific actor is ascribed the role, although the gloss on 'Jonkanoo' is retained.[16] This suggests that within the provincial circuit Jonkanoo may have been a doubled part, played by one of the company actors already in blackface as either the 'Planter's Servants' or 'Negro Robbers', for example. The Larpent manuscript altogether omits Jonkanoo from its list of characters, notwithstanding the direct reference to his person within the action that

follows (implying, similarly, that he was to be included within the capacious '&c &c' that follows reference to the Soldiers).[17]

While Reed has argued that audiences are likely to have been familiar with Jonkonnu as a cultural form, the Prospectus's gloss suggests otherwise. So too does the sole mention of Jonkanoo in a published review; Thomas Dutton's *Dramatic Censor* for July 1800, which effectively lifts the Prospectus's definition but goes no further.[18] The mutual effect of this is to underline that, on stage, Jonkanoo's singularity depended less on the particular skills of his impersonator than on the ethnographic curiosity he elicited. Correspondingly, this essay offers more than a character study alone. Rather, it reinterprets Fawcett's pantomime through the Jonkonnu tradition, using character analysis as a means by which to illuminate *Obi*'s larger themes of heroism, religion, and revolution. It asks how Jonkanoo might have interacted with – and inflected – *Obi*'s other characters, and examines what his presence might reveal about Anglo-Caribbean relations at the turn of the century.

'Silences'

Any effort to recover the cultural politics underpinning *Obi*'s Jonkanoo character must accept that the descriptions of Jonkonnu that have survived from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are limited; the output of a handful of literate white travellers and colonial settlers whose prejudices all too often impinged upon their ability to offer fair appraisals. Edward Long thus delivers a narrative of racial inferiority that necessarily restricts his ability to interpret the multiple meanings of Jonkonnu, while Janet Schaw's unprobing insistence that there was 'nothing but joy and pleasantry to be seen or heard' rings hollow.[19] Some accounts attribute short snatches of speech to the slaves, but the slaves were, of course, deprived of the opportunity to express their views directly. Also excluded from the written record are the poor white immigrants who are likely to have had the closest contact with the slaves and influenced the

creolisation of Jonkonnu by introducing elements from the Irish and Scottish mumming traditions.[20]

Descriptions of Jonkonnu from this period evince their authors' distinct attraction toward, but also repulsion from, the festivities memorialized. Lamenting the difficulties of sleeping after the Christmas Day Jonkonnu celebrations, Nugent notes that 'the noise of singing and dancing was incessant during the night'.[21] But at no point does she consider how the absence of white surveillance might have affected the festivities that continued past her bedtime. As Richard Burton decisively puts it, 'the slave plantation was not a panopticon':

> The Whites saw the slaves only in the fields and in other "professional" contexts and remained largely ignorant of the nighttime and weekend lives they led in their villages, where from the earliest days "plays" and similar rituals became the focus of *cultural* resistance to slavery.[22]

Indeed, the surviving accounts are full of lacunae. Peter Marsden, writing in the late 1780s, links Jonkonnu to the dancing and singing at slave funerals, but notes that 'there is no knowing what they say on these occasions'.[23] Matthew Lewis, who paid a songstress one dollar to teach him one of the ditties sung by the Set Girls (whose dances, complementary to Jonkonnu, emerged in the late 1770s), claimed that 'it was not easy to make out what she said'.[24] Although Lewis offers a partial transcription of the lyrics (as he understood them), he comically acknowledges the persistence of a few incongruous parts, including apparent references to 'green and white flowers, and a Duchess and a lily-white Pig', whose relevance to what had been presented as a Waterloo ditty he could not begin to fathom.[25] Consequently, while all accounts of Jonkonnu draw attention to the festival's noisy set-up and heady energies, the details are either uncertainly recorded, or beyond retrieval.[26] These details comprise what James C. Scott has arrestingly described as the 'hidden transcript'; 'discourse that takes place "off stage", beyond direct observation by powerholders', in contrast to the 'public transcript', defined by 'the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate'.[27] As a cultural form that falls

somewhere between the public (performed) and the hidden (off stage) transcripts, the Jamaican experience of Jonkonnu was at once highly visible yet exclusive.

As Kenneth Bilby observes, surviving accounts of Jonkonnu in Jamaica tell us 'virtually nothing about how the objects associated with Jankunu were constructed, how events were organized, how the songs, drum rhythms, and dances were learned and passed on, or what those who participated in the festivities thought about what they were doing.'[28] These 'silences', as the historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot explains, 'enter the process of historical production at four crucial moments: the moment of fact creation (the making of *sources*); the moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final instance)'.[29] Through the specific gloss that it reserves for Jonkanoo, *Obi*'s Prospectus thus paradoxically enacts its own silence.

While a minority of *Obi*'s patrons, especially sailors and soldiers, may have directly witnessed Jonkonnu during periods of active service abroad – making the pantomime's status as an afterpiece, and consequent popularity with second-price viewers, particularly notable – only a handful of written accounts were available at the time of the play's first production. Long's *History of Jamaica* (1774) was well known enough to be familiar to more literate theatregoers, but a number of key sources, including Nugent's and Lewis's journals, were published only posthumously (in 1839 and 1834 respectively). For the most part, contemporary theatregoers lacked the necessary benchmarks by which to test the fidelity of *Obi*'s Jonkanoo character against his Caribbean namesake. The opportunity to exceed probability was therefore ripe, but it is difficult to gage to what extent (if any) this was taken up by Fawcett.

As Reed observes, the Prospectus offers no indication of how Jonkanoo would have directed the 'Negro Ball' at the end of Act 1.[30] Furthermore, bar Dutton, contemporary reviewers remained silent on Jonkanoo as a character, and his key role in leading that scene's public rejoicings. Such omissions might suggest that Jonkanoo was merely an adjunct to the

larger spectacle of obeah, which receives explicit commentary from within *Obi*'s dramatic action, songbooks and other related texts.[31] Diana Paton convincingly argues that obeah constituted 'an essential part of the story for British audiences'.[32] But the absence of commentary on Jonkanoo does not, of course, amount to indifference. Indeed, as Said powerfully asserts, 'the power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them'.[33] For a better appreciation of how these 'main connections' function within *Obi*, I take up Cox's suggestion that we expand the skeletal pantomime texts that have survived from the Romantic period through the adoption of a broadened editorial practice that invites us 'beyond the page, to look at the paratexts'.[34]

William Elmes's *Adventures of Johnny Newcome* stands in especially interesting relationship to *Obi*. Published in two plates by Thomas Tegg in 1812 as part of his *Caricature Magazine*, Elmes's *Adventures* offers a comic narration of Jonny's travels to the West Indies and subsequent adjustment to colonial life. Plate 2 – comprising of six frames – dramatizes Johnny's romance with 'Rosa, the Planter's beautiful daughter' (Figure 1). The first frame is labelled 'Johnnys [*sic*] reception by "merry Jonkanoo at Negro Ball'; the second shows Jonny dancing with Rosa at the same ball. The connection to *Obi* is rendered immediate through Johnny's amorous attachment to Rosa (the name of the pantomime's heroine); Elmes's description of 'merry Jonkanoo' (in line with the lyrics to the song that concludes Act 1); and the decision to place Jonkanoo within a 'Negro Ball' (using a description promoted by Fawcett alone until this date). Gillian Forrester's claim that 'Tegg's image of a Jonkonnu was likely derived from textual or anecdotal accounts rather than from a first hand visual record' must be supplemented, therefore, with the 'dramatic' account provided by *Obi*.[35] The earliest visual representation of a Jonkonnu dancer, it is important to recognise that Elmes's print functions as both a re-imagining of – and contribution to – *Obi*'s enduring success.

[Insert Figure 1 here]

Figure 1: William Elmes, *Adventures of Johnny Newcome*, Plate 2. Published by Thomas Tegg, 22 November 1812. Hand-coloured etching. Folio 75 W87 807 v.3. Courtesy of The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

The festivities within *Adventures* take place in a wooden pavilion situated against a mountainous backdrop (likely intended to represent Jamaica's coffee-growing Blue Mountains). In the first frame, Elmes privileges the relationship between Jonny and 'merry Jonkanoo', a tall black man, who, like Johnny, wears European dress consisting of a shirt, coat, and breeches that have been mended at their seams. The two men lean in toward each other; Jonny holding on firmly to his cane while Jonkanoo poses with both hands on his waist, angling his chin up high in what appears to be a gesture of good-humoured defiance. Jonkanoo's curling moustache and the long wig overflowing from his hat contribute to his comic persona, while the fleur-de-lys feathers that decorate his hat (painted tricolor in at least one other version of this print) suggest Jonkanoo's political creed as a sympathizer of the French Revolution.[36] In the second frame, it is Jonny, dancing with Rosa, who occupies the space previously filled by Jonkanoo. But Jonkanoo remains crucial to the action; perched up high in the right-hand corner of the frame, his extended hand suggests an agency comparable to that of the two black musicians beneath him (mutually distinguished by the fact that all the other black characters now watch, rather than participate). Jonkanoo's positioning also suggests his kinship to the figure of a black cupid, depicted in the left-hand corner of the frame, contentedly pointing to the dancing pair. It is impossible to verify to what extent Elmes's Jonkanoo was modelled upon that of Fawcett's pantomime, but the link to *Obi* is strongly implied and would likely have been one of the print's selling points. As in *Obi*, Elmes's 'merry Jonkanoo' functions as an arresting signifier of cultural difference, here imbued with overlapping political and sexual energies.

'Fantastically dressed'

Almost all surviving accounts of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Jonkonnu festivities concentrate on the dancers' elaborate costumes.[37] The slaves themselves, free blacks, and the plantocracy all played a part in producing and financing these.[38] Even so, the anonymous author of 'The Characteristic Traits of the Creolian and African Negroes in Jamaica' (published in the *Colombian Magazine* in 1797) wondered how the slaves could afford the 'great variety of ornaments' used to adorn their costumes, 'some of which cost many pounds and considerable ingenuity to compleat [*sic*]'.[39] He writes at a time of transition in the history of Jonkonnu, recognizing that 'formerly' the festival had been 'comparatively rude': 'their aim was then a savage but is now often a polite appearance'. Before, the slaves had worn an 'insignificant or ugly mask – a close waistcoat and trowsers [*sic*], chequered like a Harlequin's coat, or hung with shreds of various coloured cloth dangling like a loose shag'; but he adds that 'many of their present figures claim attention for the fantastic modern cut of their cloaths, often of silk and sometimes enriched with lace'.[40] Nugent similarly notes that 'many of the blacks had really gold and silver fringe on their robes."[41] The Prospectus's description of *Obi*'s Jonkanoo character as one who performs the duties of a Master of Ceremonies suggests that he would have appeared in this later, more fashionable, form of attire, while Elmes's 'merry Jonkanoo' is also, interestingly, differentiated from the other slaves by his flamboyant dress (emphatically more creole than African).

According to Isaac Belisario, the combination of the Jonkonnu dancer's mask and profusion of hair lent to his appearance 'an extraordinary and savage air – scaring, and creating wonderment in the gaping crowd around him'.[42] But his own lithograph of 'Jaw-Bone or House John-Canoe' (Figure 2) interestingly resists such characterization; mannered, colourfully dressed, and with his legs in pirouette position, Belisario's dancer is more inviting than threatening. With

the distance between verbal and visual representations thus underlining the vexed nature of Jonkonnu performances, what kind of spectacle might audiences of *Obi* have witnessed?

[Insert Figure 2 here]

Figure 2: Isaac Mendez Belisario, 'Jaw-Bone or House John-Canoe' (1837–1838), from *Sketches of Character*. (RHO) 522.12 t.1 (Vol.1). The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford.

Obi garnered praise for its scenery and music, even if Jonkanoo himself failed to attract specific notice from reviewers. James Whitmore, the Haymarket's principal scenographer, was unanimously lauded for the set designs he produced for *Obi*, which were deemed 'extremely beautiful' by the *Universal Magazine* and 'highly picturesque and appropriate' by the *Dramatic Censor*, notwithstanding the latter's undisguised hostility to a pantomime privileging '*show* and *sound*' above 'common sense'.[43] The pantomime's scenes included 'A view of extensive Plantations', 'An apartment in the Planter's house', 'Inside of an *Obi-Woman's* cave', 'A *Promontory*; with a view of the Sea; and a Boat, at anchor', '*Montago* [*sic*] *Bay*, in *Jamaica*', 'Outside of part of the *Overseer*'s house, with Grounds adjacent', 'An accurate representation of the Inside of a *Slave's Hut* in *Jamaica*', 'A Sea Beach', 'A P*romontory*; with the mouth of Jack's Cave', 'A Subterranean Passage', 'The Inside of Jack's Cave', and '*Mount Lebanus'*.[44] The landscapes of Montego Bay and Mount Lebanus, adjoined to the supposedly 'accurate' depiction of a slave hut, are expressive of a desire for verisimilitude that might also have extended to the pantomime's Jonkanoo character. But accuracy may not have been the principal aim. The list of scenes suggest interest in hinting towards vertical depth by creating cavernous spaces within the stage; spaces that could function as literal representations of the subterranean passages used to such advantage by Jack, the obi woman and robbers, while also serving as figurative markers of the mysterious, unknowable dimensions of the pantomime's exotic setting (and its Jonkanoo character).

For many of *Obi*'s viewers, the opening plantation scene would have smacked of nothing more than an unconvincing fiction. Absenteeism had long been a problem in the Jamaican estates, with even the landowners who opted to live in the island preferring to reside in the capital instead of their plantations.[45] Abuses by overseers and book-keepers were consequently frequent. *Obi*'s Jonkanoo character, if fully masqueraded in authentic fashion, could have provided a visual analogue for these concerns. By 1797, the author of 'Characteristic Traits' ascribed to the lead dancer a headdress that consisted of 'a baby house, shewing different fronts with open doors, glazed windows, staircases, piazzas and balconies in which diminutive figures are placed'.[46] This elaborate headdress acquired dominance thereafter, as registered by Lewis's description of 'a kind of pasteboard house-boat, filled with puppets', and Belisario's lithograph, which details a structure akin to a plantation house carried by a dancer in whitemask.[47] Laura M. Smalligan argues that 'by holding the master's house on the head of the Jonkonnu performer, the enslaved were making a powerful statement about the social nature of the plantation. They were suggesting that without them the structure would collapse'.[48] This provocative message would have resonated all the more powerfully for those familiar with the Jonkonnu tradition and the custom of destroying the lead dancer's headdress at the end of the festivities. The Prospectus's gloss on Jonkanoo's name implies that on stage, at least, 'merry Jonkanoo' wore a headdress much more involved – and ideologically charged – than the feathered hat memorialized in Plate 2 of Elmes's *Adventures*.

'Broke loose from the house of bondage'

Notably, none of Whitmore's scene designs aimed to recreate Jamaica's famous Blue Mountains – an area that in 1800 remained under the control of the island's free Maroon communities, of which Three-Fingered Jack had been a prominent member. When the British took possession of Jamaica in 1655, they had been unable to subdue the Maroons, who retreated to the interior of

the island and used their localized knowledge to engage in guerilla warfare that proved devastating to the colonisers. At the end of the First Maroon War the British had therefore agreed to a treaty that secured 'perpetual freedom' to the Maroon chiefs and their descendants, guaranteeing their right to self-governance on the condition that the Maroon communities assist the British in the capture of runaway slaves, as well as the suppression of local rebellions and foreign invasions.[49] Three-Fingered Jack was defeated by John Reeder, a Maroon formerly named Quashee. But although Moseley clearly states this in his influential *Treatise*, it is a detail disregarded by Fawcett, who, as Paton argues, sacrifices the theme of 'maroon-plantation slave conflict' in order to deliver 'a British story told about Jamaica, rather than a Jamaican story'; 'there were only two sides to choose from: with Jack, or with the social order of slavery and the plantation'.[50] Fawcett's slighting of Jamaica's inter-racial tensions may be explained by his commercial incentive to tap into the racial politics likely to appeal to the broadest audiences. But it may also have been determined by the exigencies of dramatic censorship. With the attempt to set up a free black republic in Saint Domingue still underway in 1800, Jamaica's Maroon society provided an alternative example of black independence that was too topical and contentious to appease the office of the Lord Chamberlain.

The Examiner of Plays, John Larpent, whose manuscript copy of *Obi* is dated 26 June 1800, would undoubtedly have been keeping abreast of the shifting power dynamics that defined the Haitian Revolution. From 1791 to 1800 alone, the island witnessed massed insurrection, the fall of the colonial regime, *de-facto* abolition of slavery by the French government (in 1794), and Toussaint L'Ouverture's rise to power. In the years following *Obi*'s premiere, L'Ouverture's colonial army would seize control over the entire island, but so too would the black general be captured and exiled to France; French troops would re-establish slavery in Saint Domingue, but so too would the resistance effort consolidate its strength, regaining full control of the island by 1803. Events unfolded at this dizzying, unpredictable speed until General Jean-Jacques Dessaline was in a position to proclaim independence in 1804 and thus inaugurate the independent modern

state of Haiti.[51] With Jamaica's Maroon society representing a legally acknowledged category of the 'runaway slave', it is not surprising that Fawcett deliberately avoided such political nuance in his representation of the play's heroic black characters. Maroon history does, however, make a veiled appearance in the character of the obi woman, whose leadership of the 'Negro Robbers' underlines her likeness to the legendary Nanny of the Maroons (who was also, reportedly, a practitioner of obeah, and who led the resistance efforts against the British during the First Maroon War). Unlike Sam and Quashee, who are granted their freedom by the pantomime's close, the obi woman is forcefully carted away by the authorities. She seems to have posed a representational challenge, however: at the Haymarket the obi woman was originally played by [Mr] T. Abbot (in the tradition of cross dressing associated with comic pantomime roles), while the Larpent manuscript describes her as a 'Negress' rather than 'obi woman'.[52] The theme of 'Maroon-plantation slave conflict' may not, therefore, have been foregrounded, but, like Jonkanoo, it exists as an example of a disruptive political viewpoint that emerges from and threatens to define the edges of performance.

As Trouillot writes, it is important to remember that at the time of the revolution in Saint Domingue, 'the British campaign for the abolition of the slave *trade* was in its infancy; the abolition of slavery was even further behind'.[53] Fawcett's circumspection, or even conservatism, must be understood within these parameters: to borrow again from Trouillot, the revolution challenged western belief systems by acting out the 'unthinkable'.[54] Seeking to introduce audiences to a new, visually arresting example of black agency, Fawcett took care to ensure that *Obi*'s representation of Jonkanoo remained ideologically determined by what the Lord Chamberlain's Office (as empowered by the Licensing Act of 1737) deemed permissible entertainment.

The omission of the Blue Mountains from *Obi*'s scenery is, nevertheless, rendered all the more striking by the centrality afforded to that geography by Cynric R. Williams in *Hamel, the Obeah Man* (1827) – a novel which Tim Watson, describes as 'troubled by, but at the same time

seeking to represent in the terms of romance, black insurgency in general, and the 1823 rebellion in Demerara in particular'.[55] Fawcett could not have anticipated the insurrections that would affect the later reception history of *Obi* (and especially Murray's melodrama), but he was seemingly attuned to the need to respond to revolutions in the plural, rather than singular. Frances Botkin thus underlines that *Obi*'s debut coincided with 'debates about slavery and abolition' fuelled by 'the ongoing rebellion in Saint Domingue, the relatively recent American Revolution, and late eighteenth-century slave uprisings in Jamaica, Saint Vincent, and Suriname'.[56] These overlapping contexts are re-figured, synecdochically, in the protean character of Jonkanoo.

For audiences conversant with Edmund Burke's earlier comparison of the French revolutionaries to 'a gang of Maroon slaves suddenly broke loose from the house of bondage', political charge could readily be ascribed to the symbolic detailing of the fleur-de-lys headdress by which Elmes adorned his 'merry Jonkanoo'.[57] Fawcett thus needed to deliberately distance his pantomime from dangerous examples of black rebellion and what amounted to a revolutionary spirit of indeterminate racial profile, which the whitemask worn by Belisario's black Jonkonnu dancer strikingly embodies. As a pantomime with topical appeal, it was, however, the Saint Dominguan revolution that packed the heaviest punch at the time of *Obi*'s premiere.

French-controlled Saint Domingue had been 'the most important colony in the Caribbean, exporting far more than the British and Spanish islands combined'.[58] Not even Jamaica, the most productive of Britain's West Indian possessions, had been able to offer any real competition until the extreme violence of the Saint Dominguan revolution transformed it into the region's leading exporter of sugar. Saint Domingue was only a canoe's journey away from Jamaica, as dramatized by the conclusion to *Hamel,* which invites readers to imagine the novel's eponymous character traveling eastward 'in his canoe, in a pensive posture, gazing on the deep blue waves that heaved around him'.[59] But if the Jamaican plantocracy closely monitored what happened in nearby Saint Domingue, it recognized that there were advantages to exploit, as

well as horrors to avoid. As Michael Duffy explains, 'British military efforts in the 1790s were paralleled by a vastly increased capital investment in new plantations, new crops, and new slaves as the colonists responded to the initial British conquests and the opportunities created by high prices following the revolutionary collapse of the French Saint Domingue.'[60] In fact, notwithstanding the terrifying accounts of revolutionary violence from Saint Domingue, Jamaica remained relatively stable throughout the 1790s – its economic profile ultimately strengthened.[61]

In order to forestall revolution in Britain's colonies, as Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger expended huge sums on his Caribbean campaigns. Speaking on these campaigns to the House of Commons in October 1796, General Tarleton was reported to have said that 'almost every person in that house, and in the country, had to lament the loss of their friends, brought to an untimely end by the mortality which swept every thing before it.'[62] Amongst these mourners was Jane Austen's sister Cassandra, whose fiancé, Tom Fowles, had been a chaplain to Lord Craven's expedition, and died of yellow fever at Saint Domingue. With disease 'decimat[ing] each wave of reinforcements', massive loss was sustained in the West Indies.[63] Robin Blackburn estimates that 'overall, the British, who had to fight hard to regain Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent, and Grenada, lost eighty thousand men in the Caribbean, with heavier losses in the eastern islands than in Saint Domingue and more in this theater than in Europe.'[64] The exoticism that *Obi* represented on stage was, then, by both political and more urgently personal definition, always a fraught one. In 1800, with the outcome of the revolution in Saint Domingue still uncertain, the Caribbean was a geography imbued with peril and grief for those whose loved ones had been sent abroad.[65]

'Beat big drum – wave fine flag'

Music was at the heart of the pantomime experience – and, of course, the Jonkonnu festivities. Nugent refers to the drum used to accompany the Joknonnu songs as 'a rude sort of drum, made

of bark leaves'.[66] She here alludes to the gumbe (gumbay) drum, made up of a 'small square wooden frame, over which a goat's skin is tightly strained', as Belisario explains; his own adoption of the term 'Jaw-bone Jonkonnu' referring to the use of the lower jaw of a horse against which a piece of wood is passed up and down in quick succession, to produce a sound of distinctive rattling.[67] The band of Jonkonnu musicians (following, rather than leading, the procession) would also have used conche shell horns and cowbells. Marsden notes that in the early years, performers relied upon rudimentary creations, such as bows with two or three wires, struck with a stick, 'making a noise strangely dissonant and uncouth'.[68] This is supported by the account of Jonkonnu published in the *Colombian Magazine*, wherein the slaves are said to beat 'old canisters, or pieces of metal, singing "ay, ay, John Canoe".[69]

Interestingly, *Obi* does not seem to have made any serious attempt to recreate this unique medley: ballads and airs punctuate its soundscape, not the loud, competing sounds of a heterogeneous, alcohol-fuelled crowd.[70] The pantomime is at its most exotic in Act 2, which includes an Air sung by Quashee's Wife (a role performed by Rosoman Mountain to widespread success) with the lyrics 'Go dance to the Banja, just like mad', and the song 'Beat big drum – wave fine flag' that occurs in the final scene. But in performance, the imperative to dance 'just like mad' would most likely have been realized to comic effect by exaggerated movements; while in the printed songbook, the word 'banja' is specifically defined as 'a rude musical instrument'.[71] Audiences were thus provided with a tempered exoticism; the kind that could bridge the finale's purely onomatopoeic lyrics of 'Tangarang, tan tang, taro' to a chorus of 'God Save the King'.[72]

The legal injunction against spoken speech in pantomime invites us to be more interrogative about *Obi*'s song lyrics. The play opens joyfully with the song 'When buckra be kind / Then negro heart merry', creating a tableau that seems predicated to exonerate the Jamaican slavers – much like Lewis (an abolitionist but not, crucially, an emancipationist) worked hard to convince himself that his slaves' expressions of joy and gratitude were genuinely felt.[73] But in Jamaica, even familiar terms such as 'buckra' harboured multiple meanings. In addition to

its dominant meaning of 'master' (and thus common application as a form of address to any social superior), 'buckra' could also mean demon, 'a powerful evil being to be contained, manipulated, or driven from the world'.[74] Schaw's description of her 1724 Jamaican Christmastime as an 'Universal Jubilee' is thus problematized by her elaboration that 'every Negro in fact can tell you, that he owes this happiness to the good Buccara God, that he can be no hard Master, but loves a good black man as well as a Buccara man, and that the Master will die a bad death, if he hurt poor Negro on his good day.'[75] Upon listening to the 'Chorus of Negros' in this opening scene, (especially black) theatregoers in the auditorium familiar with the linguistic multivalence of 'buckra' would have been able to interpret the political framing of *Obi* quite differently, pushing beyond the song's otherwise received meanings in recognition of the kind of latent subversive intent that not even Lewis could convincingly shake off from his assessment of his slaves. With most of the black men and women in Britain finding work as domestic servants, to imagine their presence in the auditorium alongside white creoles, absentee landowners, and a wider viewing public whose links to the plantation economy were much less direct, fruitfully complicates the binaries of Jamaica *vs.* London upon which readings of *Obi* have so often depended.[76]

It is worth remembering that by the time Arnold composed the music for *Obi* he had already scored two comparable (arguably proto-abolitionist) entertainments by George Colman the Younger; *Polly* (1777) and *Inkle and Yarico* (1787). But in *Obi*, a normative score serves to more convincingly take away from, rather than recreate, the agency ascribed to sound by all those who witnessed Jonkonnu in Jamaica. In Michael Scott's *Tom Cringle's Log* (1829–33), the narrator claims that as far as two miles from Kingston could be heard 'the sound of the negro drums and horns, the barbarous music and yelling of the different African tribes and the more mellow singing of the Set Girls' – sounds that 'came upon the breeze loud and strong'.[77] Lewis, upon arriving at the Bay of Jamaica, first hears *then* sees the Jonkonnu procession – his attention alerted by the 'sudden sounds of the drum and banjee'.[78] But in contrast to Pierre Beaumarchais

and Antonio Salieri's 'reform' opera of *Tarare* (1787) and its divertissement *Le Couronnement de Tarare* (1790) there appears to have been no effort to vary the bass drum in *Obi*.[79] Nor were there shell sounds, as had been used to effect in William Bates's West Indian-themed pantomime *Harlequin Mungo; or, a Peep into the Tower* (Royalty Theatre, 1787) to signal the opening of the slave market.[80] Such aural exoticism exceeded Arnold's choice of instrumentation.

The Overture Songs, Chorusses, and appropriate music in the grand pantomimical drama called Obi; or Three-Finger'd Jack (1800) sold for the relatively expensive sum of 10s 6d. It was well reviewed in the *Monthly Magazine* for November 1800, which praised several aspects of *Obi*'s musical score. These included the allusions made by its overture to 'the savage dance' from Richard Brinsley Sheridan's pantomime *Robinson Crusoe; or, Harlequin Friday* (Drury Lane, 1781);[81] the 'striking novelty of style' that characterized its Negro march; 'Swear by the Silver stream' as sung by Mr Trueman (a chorus singer at the Haymarket); and the 'airy and new' '*gavotto*' [*sic*] which followed the Planter's blessing of his daughter's engagement.[82] Other songs (also sold individually and available in musical compendiums) were highlighted for attention, including 'My Cruel Love' and 'A Lady in Fair Seville' (as sung by Maria de Camp in the role of Rosa). Plaudits were also reserved for the pantomime's finale, which was founded on a movement from František Kotzwara's *The Battle of Prague* (c. 1788).

The music from *Obi* was thus domesticated, its 'noisy chorrusses' ceding to elegant, fashionable airs that could be purchased for performance in the home. As Jane Moody notes, within the pantomime itself, 'Jack's demonic yells create a discordant pattern of anarchic sounds which loudly threatens the plantation's survival'.[83] The end of Act 1 might have been imbued with this same anarchic energy, not least at the point at which its final song celebrates 'merry Jonkanoo' as 'One funny big man be master of all'.[84] But by likening Jonkanoo to a Master of Ceremonies, it is unlikely that the 'public rejoicings' and 'negro ball' that conclude Act 1 bore much resemblance to the colourful, carnivalesque spectacle that defined the Jamaican experience of Jonkonnu. Analogous to the polite airs that ensured *Obi* resonated beyond the walls of British

playhouses, the character of Jonkanoo would, at this juncture, most likely have served as another means by which to render legible the otherwise inscrutable quality of black music.[85]

'The crack of the inhuman whip'

Early accounts of Jonkonnu underline that at Christmastime celebrations lasted from early morning into night, 'halting only when [the performers were] invited into houses to dance and sing'.[86] Nugent thus began her diary entry for Christmas Day 1801 with the observation 'all night heard the music of Tom-Toms, &c.'[87] Sustaining this indefatigable procession, the lead dancer appeared among a number of ethnic bands representative of the different African tribes which, by the early nineteenth century, also included crafts- and trades-men, each with their own distinctively dressed lead dancer. The butcher party's lead dancer was thus 'clad in the hide of an ass with horns, held up with a rope and frequently lashed with a cart whip';[88] in which manner he caused patent distress to the narrator of *Tom Cringle's Log*:

> He skipped up to us with a white wand in one hand and a dirty handkerchief in the other, and with sundry moppings and mowings, first wiping my shoes with his *mouchoir*, then my face, (murder, what a flavor of salt fish and onions it had!) he made a smart enough pirouette, and then sprung on the back of a nondescript animal, that now advanced capering and jumping about after the most grotesque fashion that can be imagined.[89]

The unpredictability of the dancer's movements, his touch, and the narrator's near ability to 'taste' the soiled handkerchief (*mouchoir*) capture the acute discomfort of the viewing experience. From the dancer's perspective, however, Scott's description points to a thrill inherent to the demarcation of space. By using whips to safeguard their revised claims to the area before them (and, by extension, power), Jonkonnu dancers discouraged the spectators from coming too close: it is they who move into the perimeter of the spectators, not the other way round. Whereas

carnival, according to Mikhail Bakhtin, 'does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators', Jonkonnu decisively does.[90]

From Schaw's reassurance that 'at this Season the crack of the inhuman whip must not be heard' to Scott's description of 'the lashes of the cat, which John Canoe was administering with all his force', the whip may exchange hands but its centrality to a spectacle of violence remains foremost.[91] Sheila Barnett explains that the whip signifies 'power, vigour, suffering, bravery in the Yoruba and Ekpo cults', while for Geneviève Fabre the Jonkonnu whip functions as 'both a magical instrument and a mock-imitation of the driver's lash'.[92] The dancers' dramatization of violence here correlates with the 'silent eloquence' and 'expressive economy of bodily gesture' that Moody deems critical to the decision to structure *Obi* as a pantomime, and which representations of the lead dancer with a wooden sword, baton, painted stick or wand would have reinforced.[93]

Harlequin of traditional pantomime, was, as Roger Fiske notes, not only more 'sharp-witted' than his Italian namesake, but 'a magician', whose sword could realize the impossible.[94] As Leigh Hunt enthused: 'Harlequin's sword … is excellent at satirical strokes…We always think, when we see it, what precious thump we should like to give some persons … We would have a whole train of them go by at proper distances.'[95] Such double-edged satiric bite is inherent to pantomime, and also present within *Obi*, whose Harlequin figure is most obviously Jack, the silent, black-faced leading actor. But contemporary accounts of Jonkonnu dancers in Jamaica suggest that Fawcett's Jonkanoo could also be seen to possess Harlequin-like qualities.

As a 'pantomimical drama', rather than pantomime proper, *Obi*'s structure is less dependent upon the harlequinade form, in contrast to *Harlequin Mungo,* for example, wherein the slave Mungo (as Harlequin) is given a magic sword.[96] Although Elmes's Jonkanoo is notably empty-handed, that does not exclude the possibility of *Obi*'s actors having carried a sword in their respective impersonations of Jonkanoo. The fact that Long's account of Jonkonnu (which enjoyed the greatest currency at the time of the play's premiere) describes the lead masquerader

'carrying a wooden sword in his hand' is suggestive of this, though not of course conclusive.[97] Nevertheless, the ability to at least imagine Jonkanoo as a character invested with an agency comparable to that of Harlequin expands the model of alternative black resistance he was seen to embody.

'A slave society'

Early witnesses of Jonkonnu in Jamaica generally marvelled at the speed by which quotidian 'routines' were restored at the end of the holidays. Marsden, for instance, noted that the slaves returned to their labour 'without the least appearance of fatigue from their extraordinary exertions'.[98] Jonkonnu was thus intense but short-lived; a 'brief "sacred" interlude', as Burton poignantly describes it: 'everything happens with the permission and complicity of the Whites and once again the essential structures of Plantation life are in due course restored after their brief symbolic flouting by the Blacks.'[99] Reading *Obi* through the minor character of Jonkanoo reveals a pantomime whose commitment to abolitionist politics is much more ambivalent than generally appreciated. Notwithstanding his uncertain position within the lists of dramatis personae, *Obi* refuses to absorb Jonkanoo into an anonymous crowd of slaves and 'Negro Robbers', working hard, instead, to preserve his singularity. But it also overdetermines that singularity, ultimately sacrificing verisimilitude in order to delimit the possibilities of an otherwise unruly performance tradition.

By resisting – indeed, likely refusing – the free, unembarrassed and otherwise irrepressible energy associated with the Jonkonuu festivities in Jamaica, Fawcett's *Obi* provides us with a valuable measure of not only the ambitions, but also the limitations, of early nineteenth-century acts of cultural transposition. The performance leaves us with the important reminder that Jamaica, like Saint Domingue, was a slave society, 'not simply [a society] that had slaves', as Trouillot highlights.[100] Re-imagining how the character of Jonkanoo might have worked within

Obi reveals not only the conditions that affected acts of cultural transposition across enslaved and free societies, but also their mechanics.

While other minor black characters, such as the obi woman, were given new agency in Murray's melodrama, it is significant that Jonkanoo appears to have survived the process of adaptation unscathed.[101] As a character whose qualitative affect far exceeded his minor status, Jonkanoo ascribes perfectly to Woloch's definition of a minor character who not only has a 'subordinate narrative role' but whose 'striking fictional identity emerges *through,* and revolves around, this subordinated position'.[102] Jonaknoo's time on stage may be limited and his actions thus prescribed but, to Fawcett, he was seemingly anything but a flat character. It is for this reason, perhaps, that Jonkanoo's disappearance is so uneasily realized; the Larpent manuscript strongly suggesting that he would have re-appeared in the final celebratory scene. Enacting a conspicuous if also contingent role, rich in metonymic significance, Jonkanoo is a character upon whom *Obi*'s Prospectus deliberately focuses. Although we lack the evidence to fully recover how he moved on stage and was received by contemporary audiences, knowing how Jonkanoo *could* have appeared, and to what ends, begins to open up the world of colourful possibilities upon which Jamaica's slaves and British theatregoers mutually depended.

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[1] *Supplement to the Royal Gazette*, 29 July 1780–5 August 1780.

[2] Diana Paton, 'Witchcraft, Poison, Law and Atlantic Slavery', *The William and Mary Quarterly,* 69.2 (April 2012), 235–264 (235). See also Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge, Mass., 2008), 148.

[3] Srinivas Aravamudan (ed.), William Earle, *Obi or, The History of Three-Fingered Jack* (Plymouth, 2005), Introduction, 40. There are various accepted spellings of Jonkonnu, as listed by the *OED*. On the political connotations of these variations, see Frederic G. Cassidy, '"Hipsaw" and "John Canoe"', *American Speech* 41.1 (February 1966), 45–51 (47). I have opted to use 'Jonkonnu' to

refer to the Jamaican festivities, retaining Fawcett's preferred spelling of 'Jonkanoo' for the character within *Obi*.

[4] Aravamudan (ed.), *Obi or, The History of Three-Fingered Jack*, 40 (note 2).

[5] *Songs, Duets, & Choruses in the Pantomimical Drama of Obi, or Three-Finger's Jack…To Which Are Prefix'd Illustrative Extracts and a Prospectus of the Action*, 3rd edition (London, [1800]), 'Characters', [12].

[6] Jeffrey N. Cox, 'Theatrical Forms, Ideological Conflicts and the Staging of *Obi*', in *Romantic Circles* <https://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/obi/cox/cox.html> [Accessed 15/05/2018], n.p. (pa. 7).

[7] Peter Reed, *Rogue Performances: Staging the Underclass in Early American Theatre Culture* (Basingstoke, 2009), 116.

[8] Judith Bettelheim and John Nunley (eds.), *Caribbean Festival Arts* (London, 1998), 45; Kathlyn Gay, *African-American Holidays, Festivals, and Celebrations. The History, Customs, and Symbols Associated with Both Traditional and Contemporary Religious and Secular Events Observed by Americans of African Descent.* Foreword by Jean Currie Church, Introduction by Jessie Carney Smith (Detroit, 2007), 258–59.

[9] Hans Sloane *A Voyage to the Islands Madera, Barbados, Nieves, S. Christophers and Jamaica*, 2 vols (London, 1707), 1. xlviii–xlix.

[10] Cox, 'Theatrical Forms', (pa. 7).

[11] Kamau Brathwaite, 'Review: ALA[R]MS OF GOD-KONNU AND CARNIVAL IN THE CARIBBEAN', in *Caribbean Quarterly* 36.3/4 (December 1990); 102.

[12] Reed, *Rogue Performances*, 115.

[13] Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York, 1996), 4.

[14] Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 5; 2.

[15] Philip H. Highfill, Jr., Kalman A. Burnim and Edward A. Langhans (eds.), *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers & Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660–1800*, 16 volumes (Carbondale, 1973–93), 7. 195.

[16] See *Songs, Duets, Choruses in Obi* (Dublin, 1800) and *Songs, Duets, Choruses in Obi* (Cork, 1800).

[17] *Obi; or, Three-Finger'd Jack*. John Larpent Plays. The Huntington Library. LA1297 <http://www.eighteenthcenturydrama.amdigital.co.uk> [Accessed 19/06/2018]. The Larpent Collection consists of the extant licensing copies of plays, addresses, prologues and epilogues submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's Office between 1737 and 1824. Originally owned by John Larpent (Examiner of Plays from 1778 to 1824), the Collection (numbering over 2,500 items) is now housed at the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, and had been digitised by Adam Matthew Digital.

[18] Dutton writes (in a footnote): '*Jonkanoo*, we are told, is a grotesque character, equipped with a ludicrous and enormously large false head, and presides at the negro balls in Jamaica, in the capacity of master of the ceremonies.' *The Dramatic Censor; or, Monthly Epitome of Taste, Fashion and Manners* (July 1800), 20.

[19] [Janet Schaw], *Journal of a Lady of Quality; Being the Narrative of a Journey from Scotland to the West Indies, North Carolina, and Portugal, in the Years 1774 to 1776*, ed. Evangeline Walker Andrews, in collaboration with Charles McLean Andrews (New Haven, 1923), 108.

[20] Dale Cockrell posits that Jonkonnu and mumming plays share the same structure: 'both consist of young men in masquerade who approach a dwelling noisily, threaten the inhabitants in various "playful" ways and are bought off with gifts, money, food or drink.' See *Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and their World* (Cambridge, 1997), 41.

[21] [Maria Nugent], *Lady Nugent's Journal*, ed. Frank Cundall (London, 1907 [1839]), 65–66.

[22] Richard Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition and Play in the Caribbean* (Ithaca, 1997), 49–50.

[23] Peter Marsden, *An Account of the Island of Jamaica* (Newcastle, 1788), 34.

[24] Matthew Lewis, *Journal of a West Indian Proprietor Kept During a Residence in the Island of Jamaica* [1834], ed. Judith Terry (Oxford, 1999), 39.

[25] Lewis, *Journal*, 40.

[26] The ethnomusicologist Kenneth Bilby proposes an alternative process of recovery that privileges the oral over the written record. His interviews with practitioners of Jonkonnu in rural Jamaica confirm the central role played by song, and the importance ascribed to female singers especially, further exposing the incompleteness of Marsden's and Lewis's accounts. See 'Christmas with the Ancestors: Jonkonnu and Related Festivities in Jamaica', *Cariso! The Newsletter of the Alton Augustus Adams Music Research Institute* (Winter 2005), 1–9.

[27] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, 1990), 4.

[28] Kenneth Bilby, 'Masking the Spirit in the South Atlantic World: Jankunu Partially-Hidden History'. Paper delivered at 'The Legacies of Slavery and Emancipation: Jamaica in the Atlantic World', (1–3, November 2007), Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Gilder Lehrman Center International Conference at Yale University, co-sponsored by the Yale Centre for British Art. <http://www.yale.edu/glc/belisario/bilby.pdf>

[29] Michel-Rolph Trouillout, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, with a new foreword by Hazel V. Carby (Boston, Mass, 1995; 2015), 26.

[30] Reed, *Rogue Performances*, 116.

[31] See Diana Paton, *The Cultural Politics of Obeah: Religion, Colonialism and Modernity in the Caribbean World* (Cambridge, 2015).

[32] Diana Paton, 'The Afterlives of Three-Fingered Jack' in *Slavery and the Cultures of Abolition: Essays Marking the Bicentennial of the British Abolition Act of 1807*, ed. B. Carey and J. Kitson (Cambridge, 2007), 48.

[33] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1993; 1994), xii.

[34] Jeffrey N. Cox, "'Illegitimate" Pantomime in the "Legitimate" Theater: Context as Text', in *Studies in Romanticism* 54 (Summer 2015); 161.

[35] Gillian Forrester, 'Mapping a New Kingston: Belisario's *Sketches of Character*' in *Art and Emancipation in Jamaica: Isaac Belisario and his Worlds*, ed. Tim Barringer, Gillian Forrester and Barbaro Martinez-Ruiz ([New Haven], 2007), 72.

[36] See British Museum copy: BM Satires 11984.

[37] As Kamau Brathwaite writes, costumes are 'as much a part & expression of the aesthetic of kinesis as everything else in the whole process'. 'Review: ALA[R]MS', 105.

[38] A collection was always part of the Jonkonnu performances. Lewis notes that 'rich negroes' helped fit out the Jonkonnu costumes, and that it was customary for the master of the estate to contribute 'a couple of guineas apiece'. Lewis, *Journal*, 50; 51. On the income earned by slaves as petty traders, see Douglas Hall, *In Miserable Slavery: Thomas Thistlewood in Jamaica, 1750–86* (London, 1989). 65.

[39] Anon, 'Characteristic Traits of the Creolian and African Negroes in Jamaica, &c &c', *Colombian Magazine*, April – October 1797 (Reprinted in 1976, Barry Higman, ed. [Mona, Jamaica, 1976]), in *After Africa: Extracts from British Travel Accounts and Journals of the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries concerning the Slaves, their Manners, and Customs in the British West Indies*, ed. Roger D. Abrahams and John F. Szwed, assisted by Leslie Baker and Adrian Stackhouse (New York, 2010), 234

[40] Anon, 'Characteristic Traits', *After Africa*, 233.

[41] *Lady Nugent's Journal*, 66.

[42] Isaac Belisario, 'Jaw-Bone, or House John-Canoe', *Sketches of Character, in Illustration of the Habits, Occupation, and Costume of the Negro Population in the Island of Jamaica* (Kingston, 1837), n.p.

[43] *Dramatic Censor*, 29.

[44] *Songs, Duets, & Choruses*, 'Prospectus', 7–11.

[45] Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West indies* (London, 1982), 36; Orlando Patterson, *The Sociology of Slavery: An Analysis of the Origins, Development and Structure of Negro Slave Society in Jamaica* (London, 1967) 33–38.

[46] Anon, 'Characteristic Traits', *After Africa*, 233.

[47] Lewis, *Journal*, 36.

[48] Laura M. Smalligan, 'An Effigy for the Enslaved: Jonkonnu in Jamaica and Belisario's *Sketches of Character*', in *Slavery & Abolition* 32.4 (December 2011), 577.

[49] 'Articles of Pacification with the Maroons of Trelawney Town, Concluded March the first, 1738' < https://cyber.harvard.edu/eon/marroon/treaty.html> [Accessed 14/08/2018].

[50] Paton, 'Afterlives', 53.

[51] Haitian independence was not, however, met with diplomatic acceptance. See Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 95.

[52] Highfill, Jr. *et al* (eds.), *Biographical Dictionary*, 1. 195.

[53] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 88.

[54] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 89.

[55] Tim Watson, *Caribbean Culture and British Fiction in the Atlantic World, 1780–1870* (Cambridge, 2008), 77.

[56] Frances Botkin, *Thieving Three-Fingered Jack: Transatlantic Tales of a Jamaican Outlaw, 1780–2015* (London, 2017), 70.

[57] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* [1790], ed. Frank M. Turner; with essays by Darrin M. McMahon *et al.* (New Haven, 2003), 31.

[58] David Patrick Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies* (Bloomington, 2002), 171.

[59] [Cyrnic R. Williams], *Hamel, The Obeah Man* [1827], ed. Candace Ward and Tim Watson. Foreword by Kamau Brathwaite (Peterborough, Ontario, 2010), 327. I thus take issue with the editors' interpretation of the novel's conclusion: the canoe journey eastward does not suggest that Hamel makes his way to Africa, as they posit (*Hamel,* 101), but that he departs for Haiti.

[60] Michael Duffy, 'The French Revolution and British Attitudes to the West Indian Colonies', in *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington, 1997), 95.

[61] David Patrick Geggus, 'Jamaica and the Saint Domingue Slave Revolt, 1791–1793', *The Americas* 38.2 (October 1981); 219–33.

[62] *The Annual Register; or, A View of the History, Politics and Literature for the Year 1797* (London, 1800), 128.

[63] Geggus, 'The Cost of Pitt's Caribbean Campaigns', 699. See, also, C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (London, [1938]; 1980), 200.

[64] Robin Blackburn, 'Haiti, Slavery and the Age of the Democratic Revolution', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series 63.4 (October 2006), 647.

[65] The War of Independence ended on 1 January 1804 when Saint Domingue became Haiti, an independent black republic.

[66] *Lady Nugent's Journal*, 66.

[67] Belisario, 'Band of the "Jaw-Bone John-Canoe"', *Sketches*, n.p.

[68] Marsden, *Account*, 34.

[69] Anon., 'Characteristic Traits', *After Africa*, 233.

[70] In Long's account, the Jonkonnu dancer is followed by 'a numerous croud [*sic*] of drunken women, who refresh him frequently with a sup of aniseed-water'. *The History of Jamaica*…2 volumes (London, 1774), 2. 424. This is confirmed by the author of 'Characteristic Traits' (*After Africa*, 234). See also Marsden, *Account*, 33.

[71] *Songs, Duets, & Choruses*, 22.

[72] *Songs, Duets, & Choruses*, 22–3.

[73] Lewis, *Journal*, 147.

[74] Brown, *Reaper's Garden*, 3.

[75] Schaw, *Journal*, 108–9.

[76] On the social make-up of London's black communities, see Richard Hayes, 'The Black Atlantic and Georgian London', in *Colonial Frames: Nationalist Histories: Imperial Legacies, Architecture and Modernity*, ed. Miralini Rajagopalan and Madhuri Desari (Farnham, 2012); 137–160.

[77] Michael Scott, 'Scenes in Jamaica', in *Tom Cringle's Log* (London, [1829–33]), 346.

[78] Lewis, *Journal*, 36.

[79] Thomas Betzweiser, 'Exoticism and Politics: Beaumarchais' and Salieri's *Le Couronnement de Tarare* (1790)', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 6.2 (July 1994); 91–112.

[80] William Bates, *Harlequin Mungo; or, A Peep into the Tower. A New Pantomimical Entertainment in Two Acts as Performed at the Royalty Theatre* (London, 1788), 6.

[81] On the celebrated 'Dance of Savages' from Sheridan's *Robinson Crusoe*, see Mita S. Choudhury, 'Imperial Licenses, Borderless Topographies, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theatre', in Michal Kobialka (ed.) *Of Borders and Thresholds: Theatre History, Practice, and Theory* (London, 1999), 70–109 (94–103).

[82] *The Monthly Magazine; or British Register* (November 1800), 340–41. The term '*gavotto*' is here most likely a misspelling of 'gavotte', a French folk dance.

[83] Jane Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London, 1770–1840* (Cambridge, 2000), 88.

[84] *Songs, Duets, & Choruses*, 16. Significantly, in his account of 'Jangkunu' in 1990s Nassau, Kenneth Bilby notes that the man responsible for building the headdress was still commonly referred to as 'massa' of the festivities. 'Gumbay, Myal, and the Greta House: New Evidence on the Religious Background of Jonkonnu in Jamaica', *ACIJ Research Review* [African-Caribbean Institute of Jamaica, Kington] 4: 47–70 [58].

[85] Attempts to distinguish noise from music were, as Simon Gikandi underlines, typical of white accounts of black culture. See *Slavery and the Culture of Taste* (Princeton, 2001), 216–7 esp.

[86] Richardson Wright, *Revels in Jamaica 1682–1838* (New York, 1939), 245.

[87] *Lady Nugent's Journal*, 65.

[88] Anon, 'Characteristic Traits', *After Africa*, 234.

[89] Scott, 'Scenes in Jamaica', 347.

[90] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iwolsky. Foreword by Krystyna Pomorska. Introduction by Michael Holquist (Bloomington, [1984]; 2009), 7.

[91] Schaw, *Journal*, 108; Scott, 'Scenes in Jamaica', 351.

[92] Sheila Barnett, 'Jonkonnu: Pitchy-Patchy', in *Jamaica Journal* 43 (1978), 28; Geneviève Fabre, 'Festive Moments in Antebellum African American Culture', in *The Black Columbiad: Defining Moments in African American Literature and Culture*, ed. Seollors and Maria Deidrich (Cambridge, Mass, 1994), 62.

[93] Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre*, 89.

[94] Roger Fiske, *English Theatre Music in the Eighteenth Century*, Second Edition (Oxford, 1986), 68.

[95] Leigh Hunt, 'On Pantomime – Continued from a Late Paper', in *Theatrical Examiner*, 26 January 1817, n.p.

[96] In Bates's pantomime, it is only at the Wizard's suggestion that Mungo (as Harlequin) begins to use his magic sword. *Harlequin Mungo*, 17.

[97] Long, *History*, 2. 424

[98] Marsden, *Account*, 33.

[99] Burton, *Afro-Creole*, 76; 72.

[100] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 18.

[101] On *Obi* as melodrama see James O'Rourke, 'The Revision of *Obi; or, Three-Fingered Jack* and the Jacobin Repudiation of Sentimentality', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 28.4 (2006); 285–303.

[102] Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton, 2003), 4.